

YOUR SCHOOLS

Reynoldsburg teacher urged kids to fail test, board says

Woman resigns after district looks into complaint

By [Charlie Boss](#)

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A Reynoldsburg middle-school teacher who is accused of telling her gifted students to fail a science pretest by drawing pictures of a cat or rock — or using texting shorthand such as *IDK* or *LOL* — resigned yesterday.

The school board accepted the resignation of Heather Campbell, who was in her second year teaching fifth- and sixth-grade students at Waggoner Road Junior High School.

The science assessment was part of the district's new evaluation system, where teachers will be graded in part by how much their students improve over the school year. Student academic growth accounts for half of a teacher's evaluation; a more-detailed classroom observation makes up the other half.

Superintendent Steve Dackin said it's unclear whether Campbell urged her students to underperform on the test because it was tied to her evaluation.

"If that would have maintained the course ... theoretically, she would have benefited because it would have been reflected in her scores" if another assessment was given later in the year and the students did better, Dackin said.

Attempts to reach Campbell, 39, were unsuccessful.

The district began its investigation last month when a parent called the school after her child told her that Campbell had asked the class to "do poorly" on the science pretest.

According to district investigators, Campbell encouraged students to fail the test by drawing pictures in short-answer response questions, leaving their work unchecked and skipping questions they didn't understand.

Campbell reportedly told students she "would never tell them not to try hard again, only on this" assessment. Instead, the students said, she told them they should do their best on the state achievement tests, investigators said. Also, she told students that if they got the questions right, she would not be allowed to teach that particular area of the course during the school year.

Students told investigators Campbell mocked the test, claimed it was poorly written, adding that no one would be reviewing it.

School leaders reviewed the science pretests in the three classes Campbell taught. Of the 68 tests, 54 were considered "not sufficient attempts," mostly because students scribbled or drew pictures in the short-answer response questions.

When interviewed by investigators, Campbell denied the claims. She said she did not review the assessment ahead of time, even though teachers were requested to do so. She said she didn't notice students drawing in

their tests when she walked around the classroom, nor did she review the answer sheets after they were collected.

District officials completed their investigation last week. They already have reported her to the Ohio Department of Education's Office of Professional Conduct, which could take away her teaching license.

"This is an issue of morality for me," Dackin said. "You are charged with the most important job: to educate children. ... It was an egregious violation of that ethical responsibility."

Administrators currently are trying to find a permanent replacement for Campbell.

Campbell previously taught in Columbus. Reynoldsburg officials requested her personnel files from Columbus and found no record of discipline.

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